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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANAA 000696

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KMPI](#) [YM](#)

SUBJECT: KHAIWANI RELEASED VIA PRESIDENTIAL AMNESTY

REF: SANAA 04 2498

Classified By: CDA Nabeel Khoury for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (U) On March 22, the Sanaa Appellate Court upheld the September 6 conviction of "as-Shura" opposition newspaper editor-in-chief, Abdulkarim al-Khaiwani (reftel). Khaiwani was sentenced to one year in prison for violating the 1990 Press Law for "supporting" the al-Houthi rebellion, "publishing reports damaging to the public interests, and "public humiliation" of the President. In response, the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate (YJS) issued a public appeal expressing its "extreme disappointment" in the verdict.

2. (C) Despite the March 22 verdict, journalists expressed optimism the morning of March 23, as rumors rapidly spread throughout Sanaa that Khaiwani would soon be released by Presidential decree. Said al-Thabet, deputy chairperson of the YJS, confirmed the rumor to Poloff saying that he received "official news" from a "reliable source" that Saleh has decided to release Khaiwani. Agence France Press and Al-Arabia correspondent Hamoud Munasser also believes the information is true, according to information he received from a member of Judge Hamoud al-Hittar's Committee for Intellectual and Theological Dialogue. The source informed Munasser that in a March 23 morning meeting with Hittar's committee, President Saleh announced that he would issue a decree ordering Khawani's release as "soon as possible."

3. (C) CDA was told by DFM Noman this morning that Khaiwani would indeed be released by a presidential pardon to be announced tomorrow, March 24. "As soon as possible" turned out to be even earlier, when Judge Hittar announced this afternoon, on behalf of President Saleh, that Khaiwani is now a free man.
Khoury